



Quad 78

QUAD

1978

Quad is a little magazine of literature and art published once or twice yearly by the students of Birmingham-Southern College as a means of preserving the best available creative efforts of the campus community.

Jon Jefferson, editor

Glenda Savage, associate editor

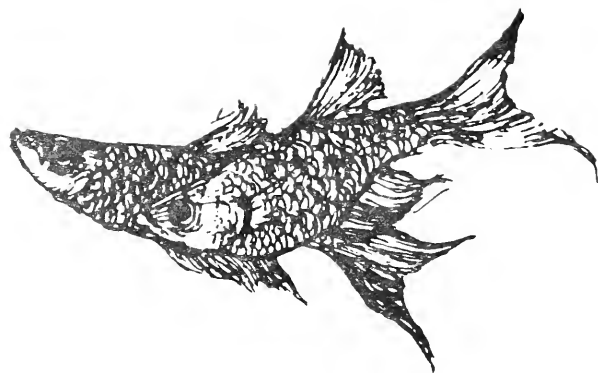
Betty Terry

Martha Speer

Laurie Adams

Laurel Stewart

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ARTWORK CREDITS

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| Betty Terry | cover |
| Bill Meredith | page 2 |
| Cheri Wheat | pages 9-12 |
| Beverly Jackson | page 17 |
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| Betty Terry | page 23 |
| JRM | page 24 |
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Cover graphic "Zair-ah II," by Betty Terry.

Good Night to the Archduke

One last waltz in Vienna twilight
the archduke like an aged teddybear
with his buttons coming off. . .
he is limping from the war but still he gets around
swimming through the lulling waves of music
dressed in scars and splendor
like an ancient rainbow trout.
as the empire crumbles
like an ancient piece of cake
he rides into the sunset
on his steed of giddy fading
like an echo on an echo
diminishing into the past
which is really only heaven
or at least a home
and it is time to go home now
because the party is over
so goodnight to the archduke
it was splendid, it was grand
goodnight to the archduke
with his cool white steady hand
yes goodnight to the archduke and out into the night
which we all share together like a curse upon our land.

-Michael Roberts

Blind Fishes

Under mountains and meadows and sunlight scenes
Of gentle life basking in the light
Buried with their living burden
Through still waters we glide like ghosts
Here silence is worn like a shroud
Here silence rings like pleading
There are no stars to guide by
Above this sepulchered sea
Deep and dark is the love of our days
Deep and dark is the silent night
In still caverns desolate of light.

--Michael Roberts

The Exile

If miles at sea were grains of sand, my distance from any safe harbor
would make a beach as vast as never, as white as hidden flesh or naked
bone. Only the sea confronts my eye, only the sea so alien to me,
reminding me that I am a stranger in a vast and hungry dominion where
my kind never spawn. I never chose to come this far. I drifted away
but a mile at the time. But miles have a way of assembling slowly
like grains of steady falling sand in a glass that marks the hours that
make the days that bury the dreams of youth and the source of light
under tons and tons of sand, under miles and miles of sea. Now even the
stars seem changed. I have gone too far, much too far, not to go far
enough. And so the sands keep falling and so the miles grow longer as
I sail on in search of a sky where destiny is written to suit my taste.

-Michael Roberts

Things That Go Thud In The Night

It's three in the morning where I live
Forever plus never amen once again--
Me and my magical expanding head
And soon the birds I hope
In skeleton keys to open my doors
Will be singing but who cares but me alone
Who makes the collage to create the mirage
Out of bits and pieces and strings and things
And her face is mingled with bits of the moon
And he said and I said and that sort of thing
But sometimes I still cry anyway
Sometimes but seldom and very far away
Like the life that danced on a yoyo string and there is still bits and
pieces lying around so if Picasso were here he could be quite amusing
but I just heard a bird in the trees I believe I wonder if the trees
believe in me I think I thought of something once long ago so I must
have been therefore I was a crying once and now I is aming as a memory
and it all shattered and there are pieces of her face and all the birds
that is to say the skeleton keys have opened all the doors and it all
fell out on the floor and hurt myself as it made an awful sickening
thud but who cares and who knows and who can understand but me being
confused and dressed in ashes at three in the morning and I loved her
dear God how I loved her but you know and who cares and there are
pieces and why doesn't someone like me in a moment give them all a
decent burial but God I am so tired but afraid of dreaming and all that
and why won't she go away and it's three in the morning that never
comes and frozen like a smile lying at feet won't go away forever and
over amen I'm afraid.

-Michael Roberts

Drinking Song

"My cup runneth over," he said
as he slid smooth as silk to the floor,
"the night blood of sorrow has filled up my head
with the whispering shadows of all I adore."

--Michael Roberts

The clouds lay on the horizon,
Sullen ships of war
Awaiting battle.
The trees dropped their leaves--
Perfect camouflage for a sleeping earth.
Stark limbs twisted
Toward heaven, ready for the fight,
As the chilling breezes made
Fitting advance guards
For winter's onslaught.

--Solomon Wistra

On the death of dream places

In the magical mists
Of nightmare lands
Where demons darker
Than the souls of men
Dwell in broken bone houses;
In the fleeting fog
Of fantasy sights
Where faery queens
Bestow their kisses
On mortals now and then;
In a hidden dale
Between the moons,
When the owl's shadow
Is lost in the trees,
There I lived
When I was wiser,
There
I lived
When I was
Younger.

When the castles
Have crumbled
And rains have
Washed away my pictures,
And the wind
Has stolen all
My fancies
Where have I gone?

In the warm
Trembling
Of loves lost
And gained
Where was I?
When I was young,
When was I young?

Whose memories
Are those
In the china teacup
In the hall?

A pretty park,
Wooden benches
Set in a warm
Sun.
The trees with
Their spring attire,
Wrap their arms
Around a
Shining blue pool
Where the ducks
Paddle back and
Forth,
Calling to each
Other in rough
Funny voices.

But as the sun
Goes down
And a chilled wind
Springs up,
Blowing the scraps
Of paper into little
Piles;
Whirling them round
Then tossing them aside,
I am tossed to your side,
Where the wind
Can't reach me,
The warmth prevails
In your arms,
And I escape
For now.

--Solomon Wisstra

CALDER

FURNITURE

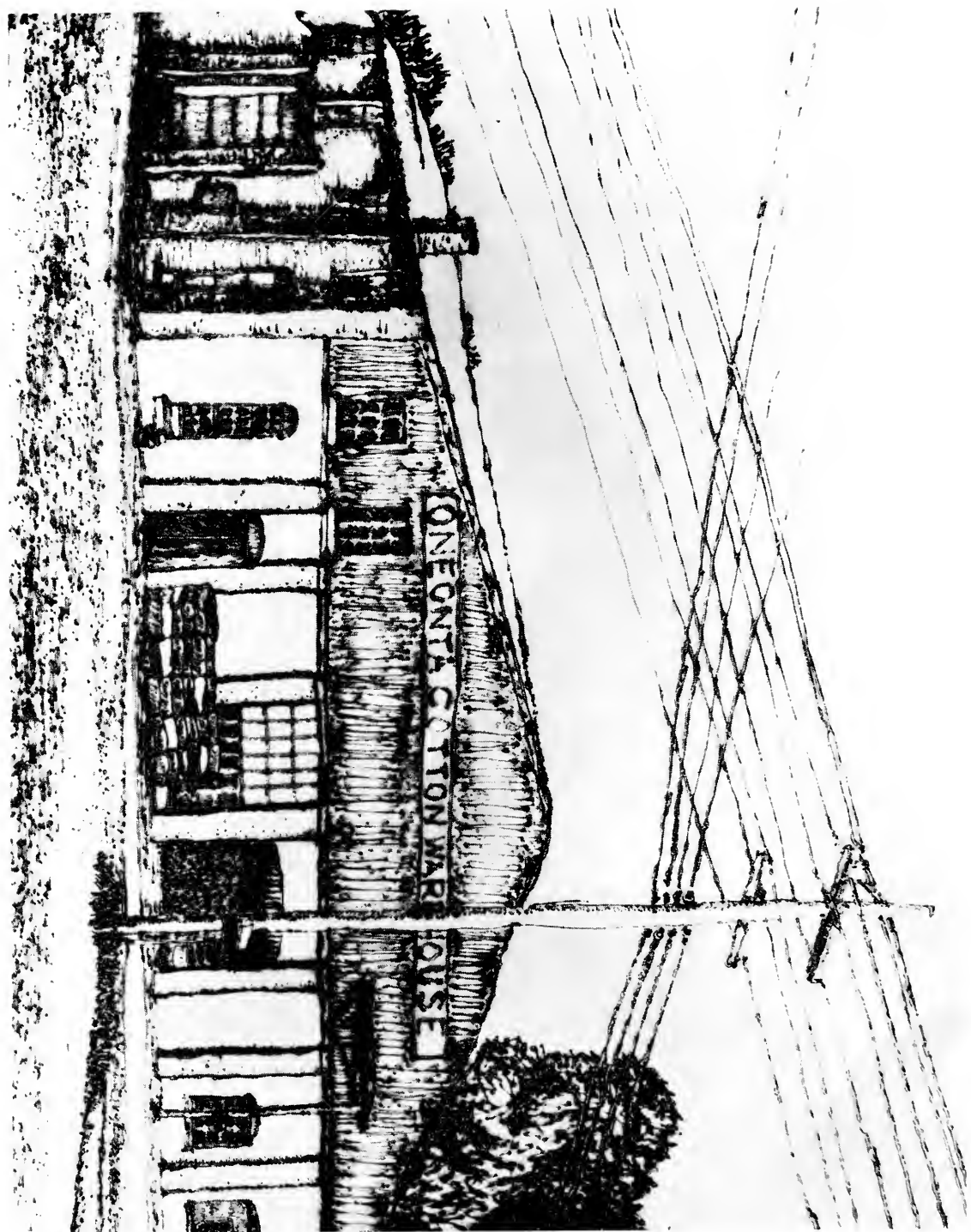
1977

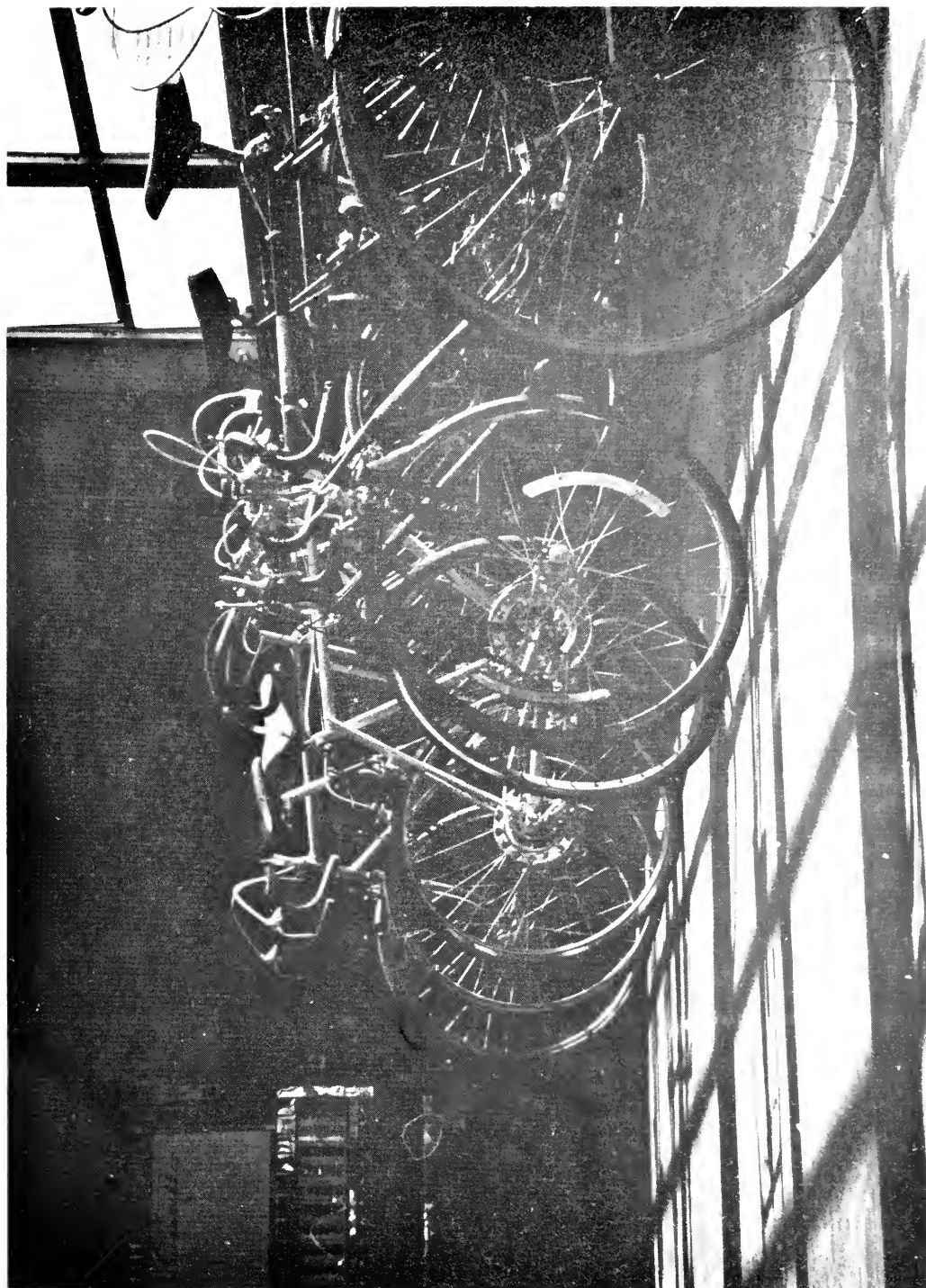
CINE

JEFFERSON HOME

New IDEAL

100







when these days dry, lady,
and you,
how will you quench that thirst
you're so notorious for?
all the babies racing, running noses
no moisture, no humidity.
i and my timidity
e'en were it broken through
could n'ere drench that desert
nor no water from that rock.

— anonymous

Man, he make the fire
Woman, know the sea of thee
Dear Abby From an Angry Believer

woman,

to thine own self be a fish--swim with the water.
the answer lies awaiting in the sea. the shark.

woman,

in thine image and thine likeness is the foot
imprinted on the wet sand.

woman,

make your chosen twelve all Mary's with one judas
mother tagging along. have him bear the pain of you
sans the pleasure of his member. ship.

— anonymous

on the top of a morning
quite like the mount
sentence was given
"twelve loaves and fishes"
meet their maker
party paper hats
paper napkins
paper plates
partly cloudy palates
EAT
their maker
standing tall and black
in the cold gray
a man

— anonymous

5-15-77

There is a moth in the window.
He sits there quietly, upside down,
craning his feelers. . .
Seeing the world the most sensible way.

— Martha Baird

6-3-77

The lazy summer afternoon is suspended - freely - itself - in a droplet of time. I close my eyes, and listen, and feel.

The sun, filtering through a spot in the thick dogwood leaves overhead, strikes my left eye, and is a field of warm red. A fly drones past my ear, and I smell the wet dirt from underneath the faucet only a few feet away. From our porch the door closes, and the heavy chimes hanging on the beam dole out slow, wavering notes into the warm air, when they are nudged by its listless movement. A car passess behind me and comes to a gravelly stop, then turns toward the highway. I can follow its travel for almost a half mile down the road (as it has a weak muffler) listening to the changing of the gears as it picks up speed. A dog barks, and from the same direction, only closer, a neighbor calls her grandson. A bird in the tree above me drives off an intruder; a child across the street shrieks his lungs out in play. My probes touch noises and smells of abundant and energetic life, lying under the surface of the seemingly indolent afternoon.

— Martha Baird

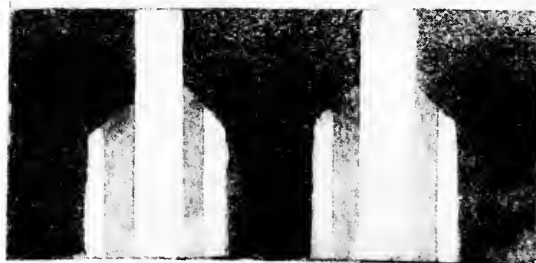
Reverie

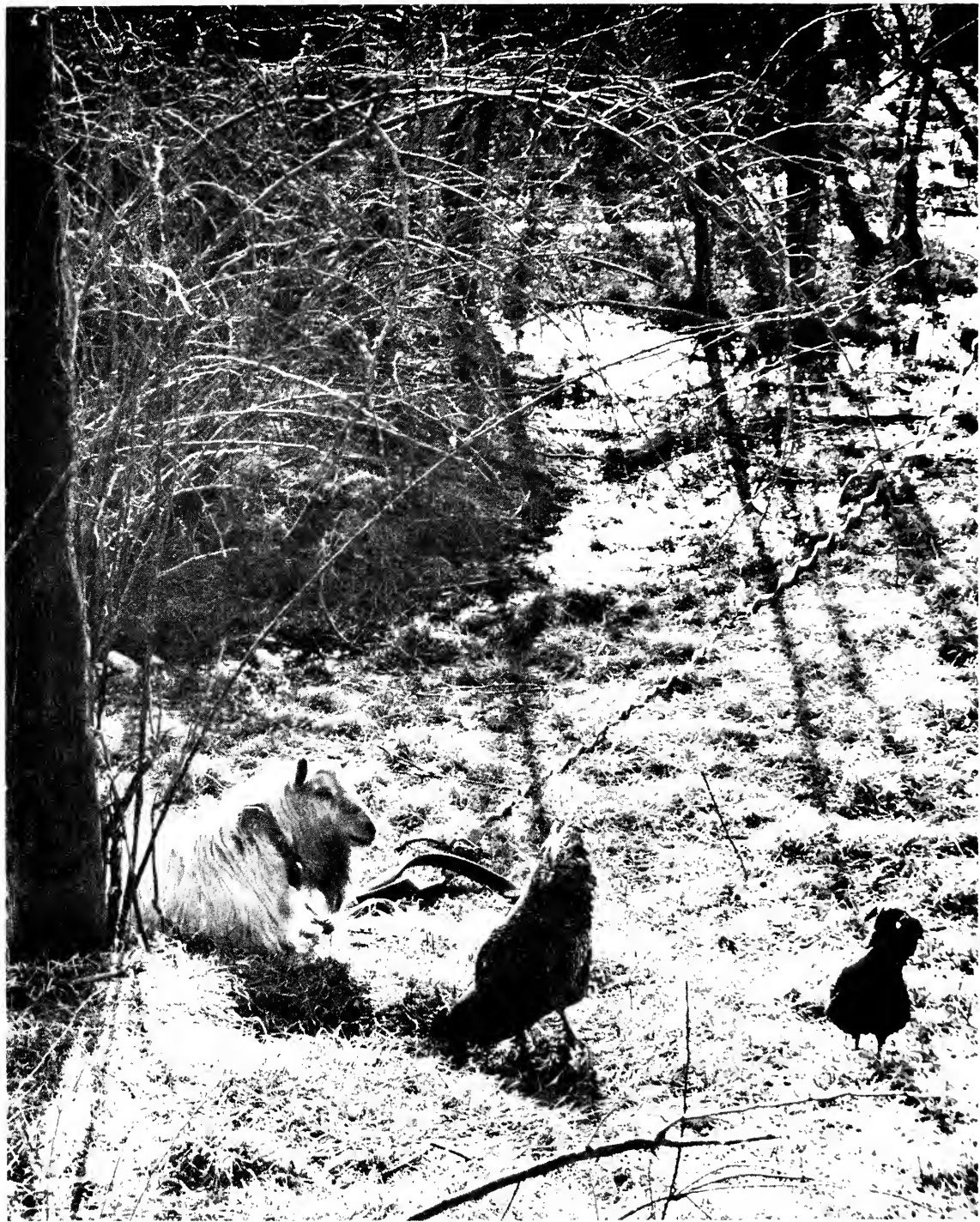
A silky hand, one balmy day
Picked a sprig of evergreen to daydream with,
And in doing so,
Crushed a small, pale berry between its ringed fingers.
The berry fell, unnoticed, to the glittering sidewalk.

The little succulent, white and vulnerable,
Seemed barren and useless,
Its skin hiding any sign of life.
The essence within was unable to pulse
Through the wan sheath:
Some slip of Nature's mind had
Failed to add a birthing seam to it
And thus, it remained in darkness,
Powerless to reveal its fertile tissues,
Ripe and bounding with potential.

(A gentle, soft stroke upon its protective shell
Would have caused a tiny rent
Sufficient to free the bright contents
To put forth its verdant shoots of life.)

Yet that soft hand plucked it and
Lost in its own concerns, unheedingly squeezed
So that the berry burst in the fingers
And was dropped behind on the path
To dry and shrivel in the benignly smiling sun.





White carnations.

The sort of thing you want your eyes to eat
despite the ragged edge.

They are the bone beneath rococco flesh,
ragged as

skull of mice
in absence of red and
soft white grey to stick,
furry, on your lids. It
bleached beneath the swingset
all child-summer. Indented
ground when even children
wouldn't prod it with their
toes. Became like

dry carnations

staining ochre shadows to a yellow page
some time to rustle long stemmed
from a book,
unnoticed.

— Glenda Savage

A Jewelry Box

"Look at this gross necklace. Who gave me this. I'm trying to think. Isn't it ugly. Robert gave me this. He was such a shit. He broke up with me the day before Christmas. He gave me a poetry book of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, you know, how do I love thee and all of that crap. And then he broke up with me and I threw it across the room and it broke the binding. But that's o.k., it was only simulated leather.

"What do you want to talk about? Sex, violence, something with substance? Ancient Rome?"

"no."

"My mom gave me this. Isn't this a pretty heart locket?"

"Who gave you that?"

"Chris. I dated him for three years. See this, my Aunt Nonnie gave me this. She's not really my aunt.

"Here's a silver frank piece. Real silver. You don't find them too much anymore.

"This is my baby ring, look Kay!"

"Oh, how sweet!"

"I love to go through jewelry, don't you?"

"yep"

"Oh, I gotta show you this. This looks like something out of the Voodoo tribes of Africa. This lady gave me this. She thinks she's really cool. She likes to give young people hip things like love beads."

"Do you ever wear it?"

"No! My mother says, 'Why don't you ever wear this?' I say, because it's the ugliest thing I've ever seen in my life.

"Look, a Reed and Barton pewter sand dollar. I had a friend named Drew. Remember Drew? One time I was feeling really down and he gave me this locket. Sometimes I feel so bad because my name is Cathy Johnson and everywhere I go there's someone named that. He brought me this locket and on the back it says The Cathy Johnson.

"All the men in London have pierced ears."

"why?"

"It's the fad.

"See this bracelet. This is from Smay. Remember Smay? He sent this to me on my 18th birthday. He was in London then. He sent me this bracelet and this little

note that said, 'Dear Cathy, I wish I could be with you on your birthday, but I can't. So I went to the finest jeweler in London and picked this bracelet out especially for you.' It's supposed to be silver, but this is like aluminum. I mean, I could crush it with one hand! I never wore it and he'd always ask me, 'Why don't you wear it?' So sometimes I'd wear it and take it off after he'd seen it."

"Oh, how funny!"

"And this is a gross thing my father gave me for Christmas one time. I keep all these gross things in one box.

"Oh, don't you want to see my shark teeth?"

"yea"

"My family is weird. Everytime we go somewhere we bring everyone something back. My mom went to Florida with a friend. She brought everyone one of these gross shark necklaces. We would wear them around the house. Can you imagine!

"This I bought in Venice in 1970. It's an antique silver and garnet pendant."

"You bought that yourself? And you like it?"

"Uh huh"

"What else have you got in your jewelry box?"

"You name it.

"I've got to show you this charm bracelet. I've got to tell you how I got it. It's kinda bad to tell. I got it in 6th grade from a Sunday school Christmas party. There was this guy, if he got my name I knew he would give me a life savers book. I thought he had gotten my name. He had drawn this other girl's name and she had drawn mine and she had forgotten to get a present, but her mother had given her this bracelet she had gotten for her sister. Well, I got the charm bracelet and she got the life savers book. Her mom had told her to get the bracelet back, but she wanted the life saver book. I wore it once in a play where I was a gypsy.

"Look at this piece of jewelry. I was 16 in New York. I was walking around alone."

"You were walking around alone in New York?"

"Well, it was in the middle of the day, in August. I was looking in the window of this really nice jewelry shop. These men came outside the shop and said they were noticing how well my coloring would look with jade. I went in and tried on a necklace and all this other jewelry. They offered me a contract to do this catalog. They gave me this necklace as a memento. You know how New Yorkers are."

"What's the most important thing in there?"

"My baby ring, my earring, this thing my father gave me, my garnets."

"There's not one thing?"

"No, there's just everything."

--Elizabeth Maloof

Some people like views --
Like lakes and cities at night with their lights sparkling.
A handful of gems thrown upon black velvet.
But I like smells ...
Burning leaves in October.
And chocolate melting in your hand during the fair in July.
My pillow damp and sweet after your head laid there ... after love.

Uncle John's field before the corn crop goes in,
Fresh earth upturned -- worms, old leaves with a black, dead smell.

Books bound in leather - gilt, and parchment.
Signed by the author ...(a limited edition, you know)
Hair after you ran in the cloudburst ... your car was at the far end
of the lot...
Didn't the radio say only 40%?

You --- we'd been on the mountain three days...Smoke, and that slip
you made in Le Conte's muddy slopes ... and March wind ...
deep in my nostrils ... it was good ... natural.

The den in January --- we'd gone to your mother's house for Christmas.
The tree still stood near the oak sea chest. Arriving home --evergreen.

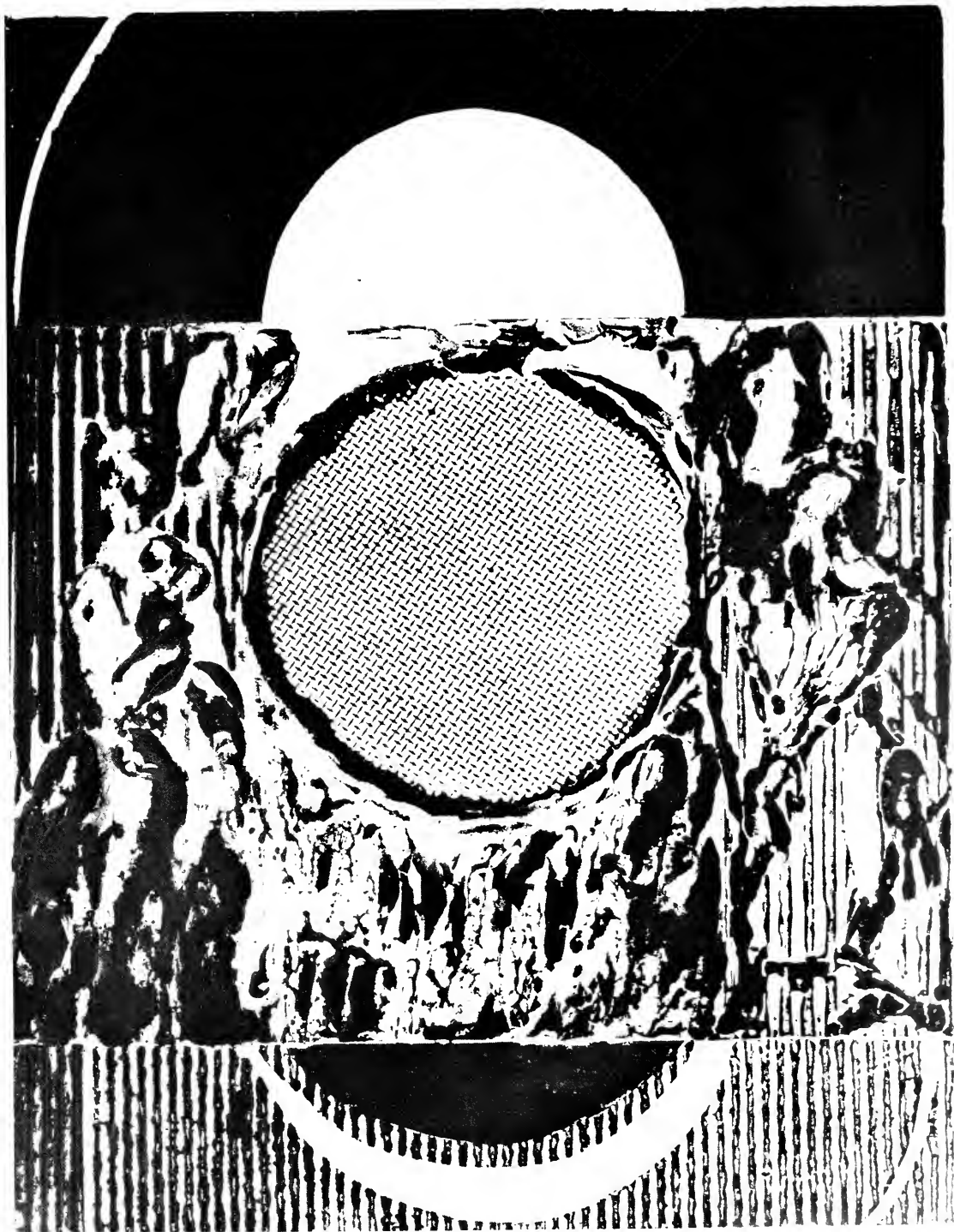
Smells ... Keep your black velvet.

--JRM



BY EASY







Ghost

The years have flown by. Their winds
have not disturbed the fine soft
gray dust of you that fills the
attic of my mind.

But when the moon is full the dust
shifts and moves like the moon-
beams streaming in through my
window.

I can but dimly see the familiar
objects of the room. They look
like yestyear's shadows only half
remembered.

Your face is clear. The eyes have
the same twinkle, and the laugh
sounds the same. Only the laugh
lines have grown deeper.

Your touch is light and cool like the
spring breeze coming in the window.

We dance away the moonlit night. For
at dawn, you must leave.

The bright light of day chases moonbeams
and you away.

It also settles dust.

When Winter Fades

Candy floats face down in the pool
Imagining how dead feels.
Her breath, her weight sends muted waves
To caress the stone white walls.

Her skin is washed into wrinkles.
She finds no youth. Instead a hag
Emerges from the waters.

Breaking her skin against the stone
She watches blood rise on her leg
Cautiously slips it back inside
The water destroys the red.

Letting the sun cover her body
Deciding to search for a past
She studies the book of numbers
And chooses one of seven.

No answer, no answer.

Parasols dance in the sun
Umbrellas droop in the rain
Their master's faces never change.

But Candy turns from window thought
And pulls the phone in off the lawn.

Her shadow coats the afternoon
She stills the silent voice of thought.
Echoes of the child's mourning song
And memories of a thousand
Dry winter days slink through her head.

Candy, come nearer, come nearer
Lay your shadow upon this rock
Wanda Juana Belladonna
Woman weaving bride's ribbon dress.
I tie into your sweater's web.

Remembering the size of his thigh
Seeing the swell of her ankle
Shot from the end of leather pants
Wondering of the loss inside.

Candy! first there was snow, and sweets
Then the smoke of purgation
The love for lost, sleeping ladies
And secret hallway proposals

The yes man with only one no:
The first magician. The second
Never speaks, watching his music
Silent grinning penetration.

Still I know neither the touch of
man nor sun . . . Candy, I know eyes
The yes of I, the sound of sea
But not the lady of his side.

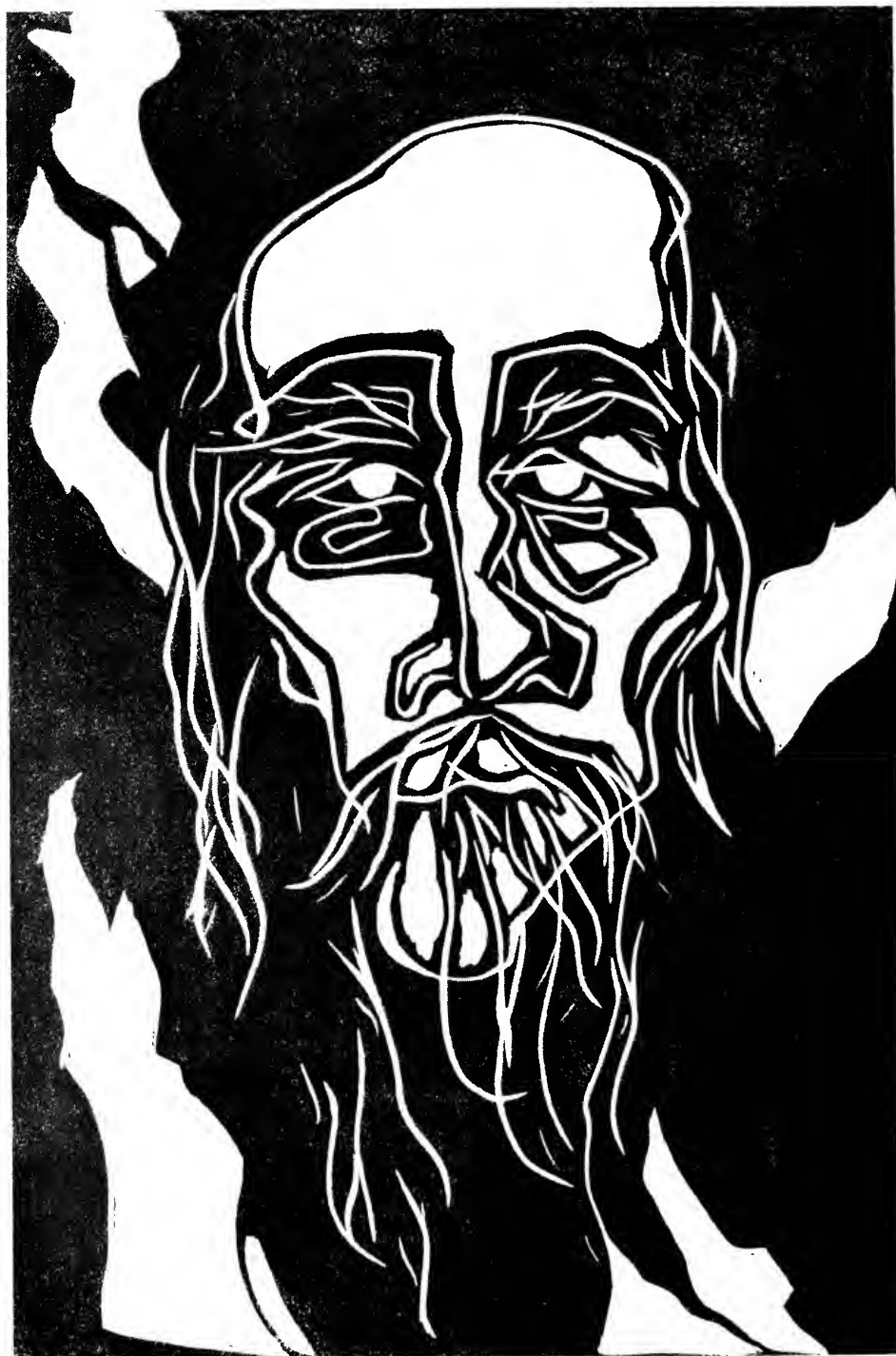
A bit of tobacco
Drifted to the floor
As his withered fingers rolled the thin paper
Tightly about the dried leaves.
His rough tongue moistened cracked lips
Licking the paper's edge
To shape a firm cigarette.

Shaky hands fumbled with a match
While watery eyes roamed
About the sparsely furnished room.
Slowly turning the worn sole of his shoe
Towards the ceiling- a familiar scrape.
The friction yielded a perfect flame.

Placing the cigarette
Between expectant lips,
His shallow cheeks drew sharply in.
A puff of smoke.
His eyes crinkled with delight.

- Martha Speer





Work

The secretary tiptoes on her
typewriter keys as I enter.
My desk by the window waits,
its wellworn path guarded by the fates.

The papers before me blur into
concentric doors fading away.
A shake of the head turns it to
papers again. How much more today?

It begins to rain outside,
and I notice the secretary has stopped.
Maybe she got mad at being topped
and went somewhere to hide;
or maybe, when drying her tears, she dropped
an R and suddenly died.

I finish up my work
for the daze I am in.
Behind the file cabinet, words lurk
near meanings. Doors to open.

--Warren Feist

The Parting

From the source we swim to where the slender
river joins her mouth to seas that rise
and jerk us toward a whirling silence. While
you drown on a sludgy bar, I tumble in waves,
tasting salt from river brine. My body
drags to shores that tear against my skin.
I flail my fists and strike the rocks and shells.
I track across the pebbles of silty beaches
and stagger toward the river. Bending over
fetid waters, I stare into currents that
dissolve a mired, hypnotic face in blankness.

--Cathy Hamrick

Granddaddy Ray's

Highway fifty-three slices a
pasture splotched with yellow grasses
dying in the heat. Trucks roar by,
scattering dust on Ray's acres.
Light from the low sun shafts the thin
redness swirling from the roadside
and touches warped beanpoles that lean
crazily in Ray's yard. His house
stands on cement blocks. Boards shed paint,
peeling brown coats while dimity
curtains hang limply in windows.
A woman stoops on the porch and
waters geraniums sprouting
in tin cans. An old man pauses
to squirt tobacco juice at weeds
in the yard while he sits on the
steps in fading light, shelling peas.

— Cathy Hamrick

Storm at Jim Dean's Mill

In fields of northern Georgia, bloody clay
Spills into furrows of neatly plowed earth.
Strips of mud squeeze the girth
Of swelling pastures that rear beneath gray
Skies. Jim Dean's mill is shadowed by pines
And branches striking against boarded windows.
A gust rips shingles from the roof and blows
Rain that hammers the mill in broken lines.
The water wheel methodically lifts
Confusion — white, blind — pouring and gushing
Like winds and torrents furiously rushing
From the skies. The wheel turns and sifts
The sliding creek while rigid paddles steal
And cradle drops to rust them on the wheel.

— Cathy Hamrick

Mississippi Evenings

The night creeps down my spine
like a flirtatious lover I used to know
who had just discovered the evening gown is
strapless and backless
And there are magnolias behind the wispy hairflow.

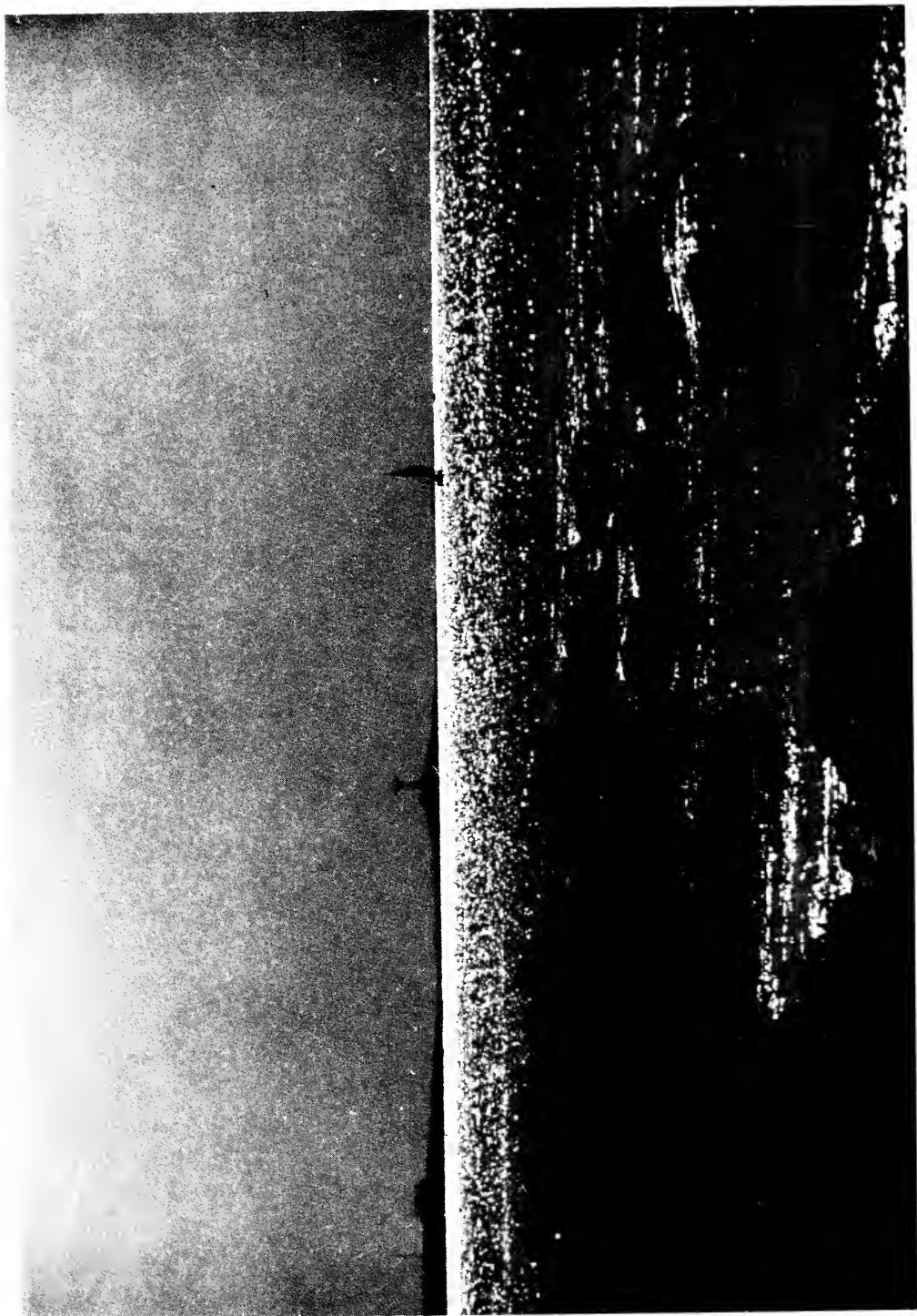
Evenings on the delta
stars and saucers in the sky
and madmen on the earth who smile and toast the meanings
not just they
But their fathers and their fathers' fathers never understood.

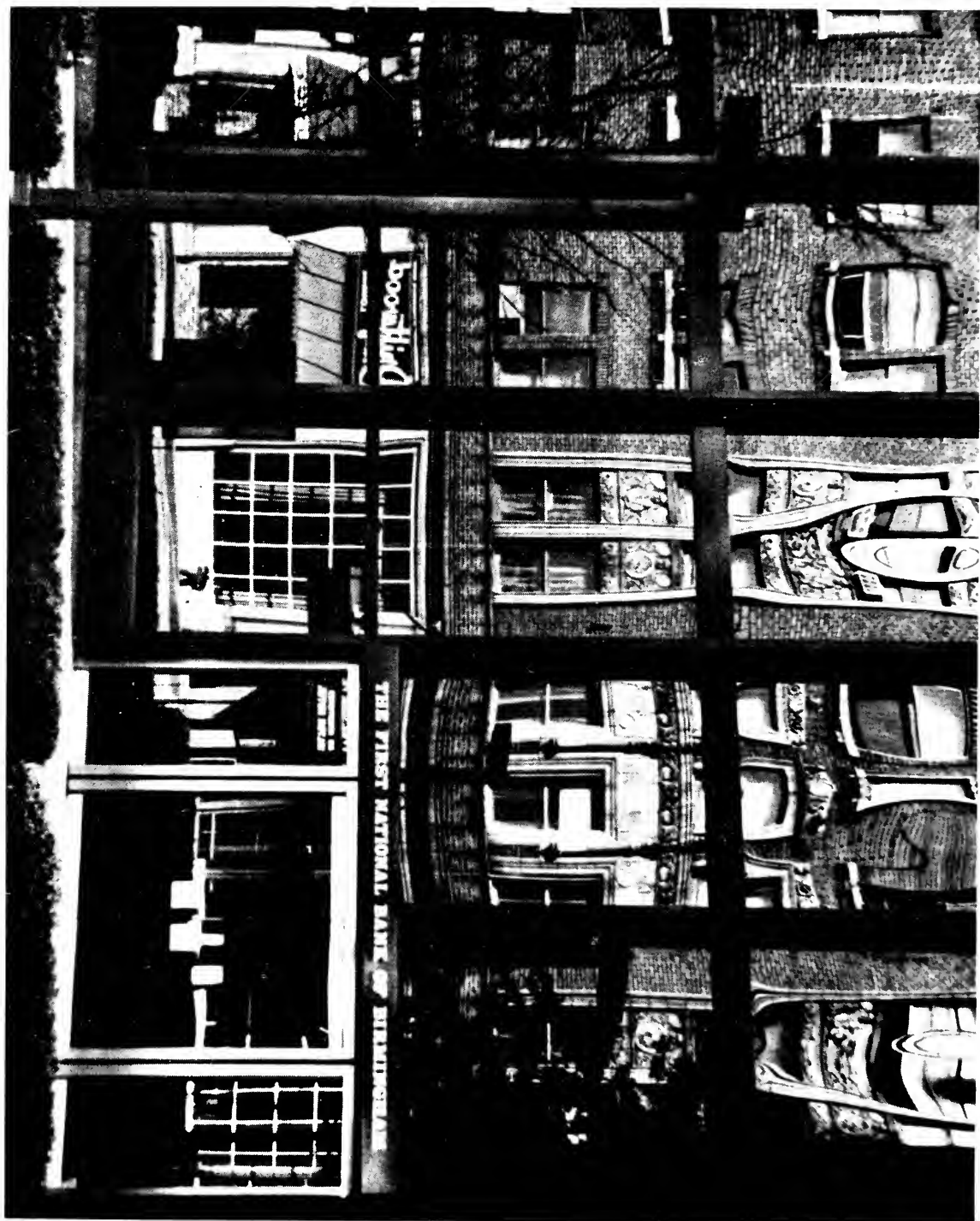
And I smile, like the night does,
and open my arms to them,
pour the champagne and honey and whisper songs
and meanings
That glimmer through the wine-colored fog.

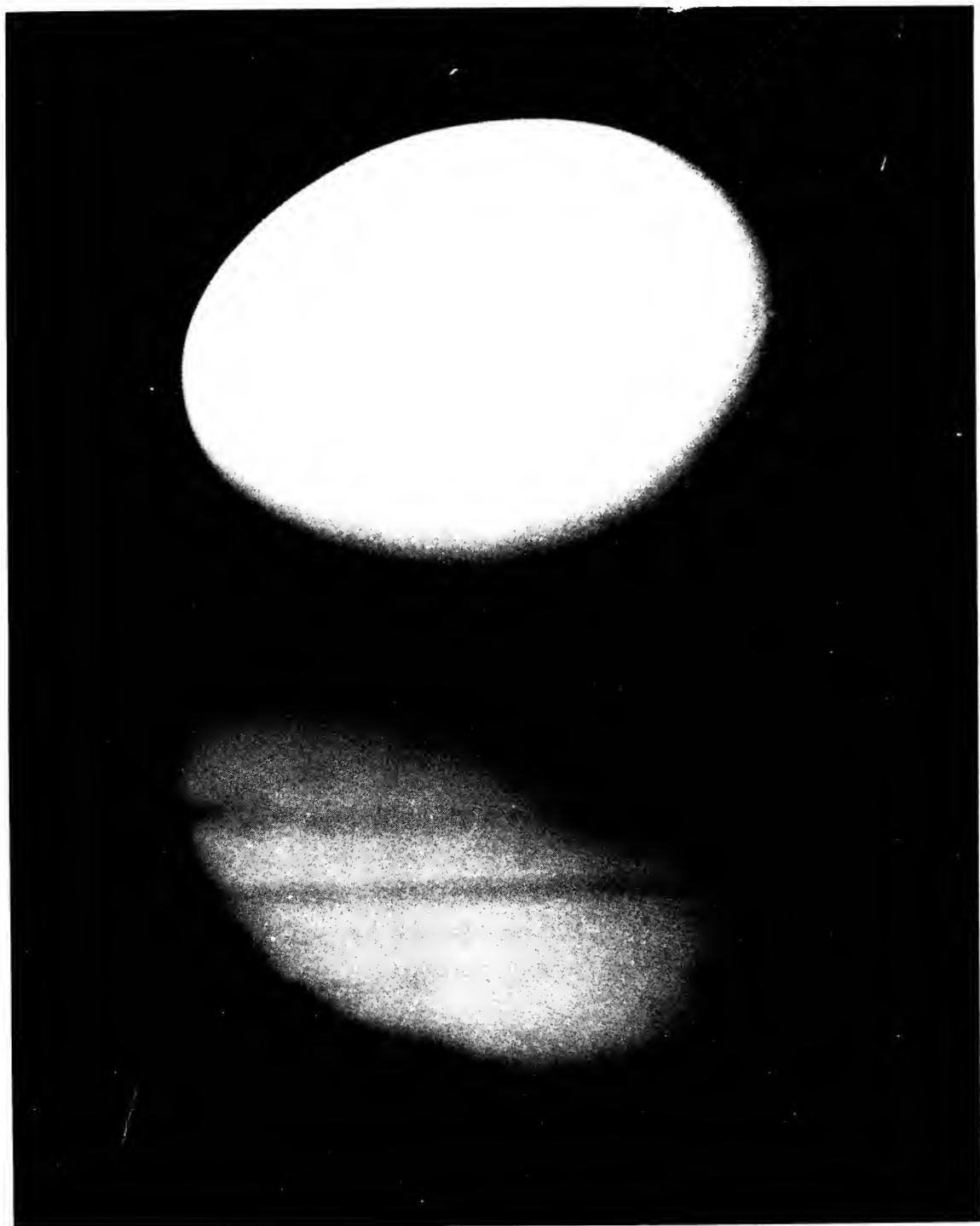
Outside, in crystal dark,
the night and I stand and wait
For the man who can find us.

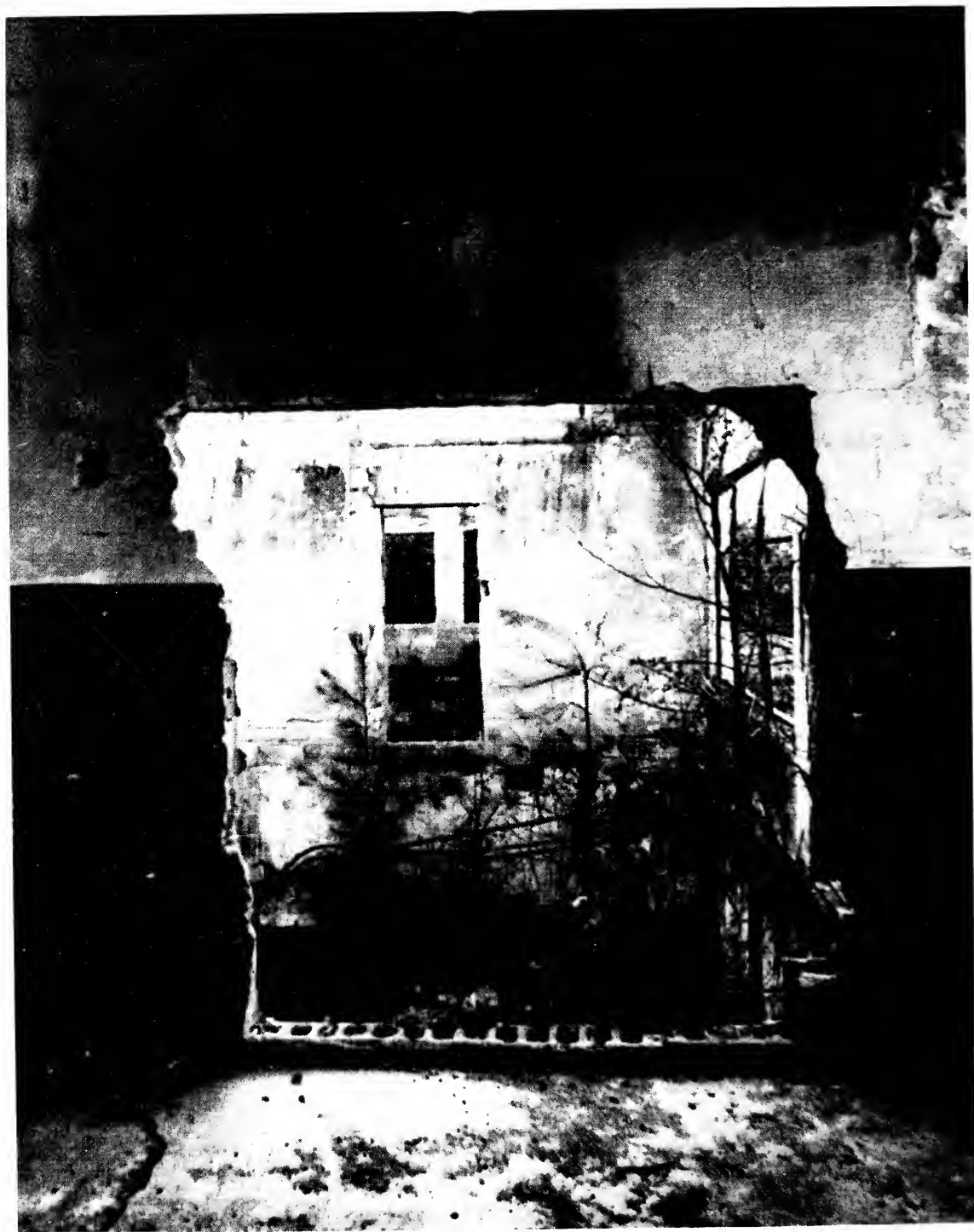
Susan V. Lair

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THE CALICO CONSPIRACY

Felix T. Hoke burst into his apartment and just as quickly slammed the door. He listened at the door for a moment, wide-eyed and breathless. When he was sure no one had followed him up the stairs, he flipped on the lights, hurried to the window and peeped out. He was careful that no light showed through the window. Only when he was positive that no one had followed him did he breathe easier. When he went to the newsstand earlier to buy a newspaper, he had seen them. They were almost everywhere, now. They had eyed him suspiciously and he knew that they suspected him. Now there was virtually no escape for him. He must take measures to protect himself.

The mirrors! The mirrors! He had seen them in the mirrors countless times peering out at him. He had to stop them. He ran to the utility closet and got out a can of black paint and a brush. He rushed madly about the apartment carefully covering every square inch of every mirror. When he was through with the mirrors, his eye caught the TV set. He had known that they watched from that too. He supposed that they also listened. He covered the screen with a hasty coat of paint and kicked in the place where the speaker was. He suddenly remembered the telephone. He grabbed the phone wire and ripped it out of the wall. He did the same to the other phones in the house. He had a little trouble with the wall phone in the kitchen, but after using a large butcher knife as a pry-bar, he was successful. He stood back and admired his work when another thought struck him. What would his wife think? There was no getting around it now, he had to tell her all he knew. But what if she was one of them? What if . . .? No, no he mustn't think of that. He simply had to tell her.

Mrs. Dorothy Hoke opened the front door and walked in. She found it strange that the door was not locked. Felix almost always locked the door.

"Felix, I'm home. Help me with the groceries." She shifted the bags so that she could flip the door shut with her foot. "By the way, you forgot to lock the door."

Damn! He should pay attention to what he was doing. One of them could have simply walked in and taken him unawares. Felix reached for a sack of groceries.

"Thank you dear. Do you know that lettuce is now . . ." Mrs. Hoke left the sentence unfinished. She surveyed the apartment, her mouth agape. "Felix, what the hell happened here? It looks like some nut got loose and wrecked the place."

Felix sat the sack of groceries down on the dining room table. "Now dear, sit

down. I've got something to tell you that's very important."

"You sure do." said Mrs. Hoke as she sat in one of the chairs.

"First . . ." Felix walked over to the radio, turned it on and turned the volume up loud. Mrs. Hoke's expression became more puzzled. "So they can't hear." Felix explained.

"Wha . . .?" Mrs. Hoke began.

"Now where do I begin. Obviously at the beginning. But just when did it begin? Long before I was born probably. But for simplicity's sake, we'll start at the time when I first became aware of their presence. Once upon a time . . ." Felix had a flair for the dramatic.

"Felix!"

"Sorry. I first noticed them about seven years ago. You remember when I wrote that letter to the editor of the Tribune about the Labor Unions becoming too powerful?" Mrs. Hoke nodded her head. "Well they first began following me then. I suppose I had become too important for them to leave alone."

"Too important! What do you mean? You're just a CPA who makes barely enough for us to make ends meet. Why are you so important?"

"I don't know, Dorothy!" Felix was exasperated with his wife's stupidity. "I suppose I knew too much." Mrs. Hoke laughed out loud at this. "Well," Felix defended himself, "they must be connected with the Labor unions in some way. Or maybe they figured that I was some government propagandist. I don't know the reason. All I know is that they follow me home every night."

"How do you know?"

"I see them, of course."

"Oh, of course, how stupid of me."

"Yes. One follows me to the office every day and one follows me home every night. Sometimes it is the same man. Other times he will be different. But there is always one there, every day, without fail."

"What do they look like?" Mrs. Hoke asked in mock seriousness.

"Stock spy types. You know, over-sized trench coat, slouchy hat, dark glasses, the works."

"And they follow you?"

"Yes." Felix was completely sincere and earnest. Mrs. Hoke had first thought that Felix was putting her on but now she could see otherwise.

"Trench coats and everything?"

"Just like I told you."

Mrs. Hoke could not hold back any longer. She burst out laughing. It was a deep, full laugh that brought tears to her eyes. "God! This is funny!" she gasped

out through whoops of laughter.

"Stop it! Stop it now!" Felix was outraged. He had needed someone to confide in and now that he had, he had been rejected. "It is real! They follow me, they watch me, they listen to me! Everything that I do or say is carefully noted and filed away for future reference! Stop laughing! It is not funny!"

Suddenly Mrs. Hoke quit laughing. "You're damn right it isn't funny. I'm married to a blasted crazy. A nut! A full-fledged looney!"

Felix came close to hitting his wife. He had never liked being called a looney. He had never even particularly cared for the word. "I am not! It's true. Every word of it. They could be listening now." Felix glanced up nervously at the walls of the room.

"They, they, they! Always they and them! Who! Who!"

"For God's sake, Dorothy." Felix made an expansive gesture with his arm, "The CIA, the FBI, the KGB, the Gestapo, the thought police!" The headline of the newspaper caught his eye. It was something about the fabric worker's unions refusing to work in support of some other nameless union. Because of the strikes, there would be shortages of various things among which were certain kinds of cloth and fabrics. "There! There!" Felix stabbed his finger at the headline triumphantly, "That's it! It's a conspiracy. A . . . A . . ." Felix searched for the proper words. "It's the Calico Conspiracy. The Calico Conspiracy." Felix repeated the name over and over to himself a number of times relishing the sound of it. His wife had slumped back in the chair. Her mouth again hung agape. She was understandably taken aback by her husband's sudden frenzy.

Felix sat down in a chair. He was physically drained by his sudden outburst. He was silent but a contented smile now stretched across his lips. The silence was only broken by the inane babbling of the now-forgotten radio. Mrs. Hoke rested her head in her hands.

"Oh dear," she mumbled, "Oh dear me."

Early the following morning, Felix started awake. From the bathroom came a peculiar scraping noise that grated Felix's nerves. Instinctively, he reached his arm out and felt for his wife. She was not there. Felix crawled out of bed and crept over to the bathroom door. The door was slightly ajar and Felix could see fairly well from the light that spilled through the crack. There was definitely someone in the bathroom. The strange scraping noise began again with renewed vigor. Felix flung open the door and stood ready to do battle with any intruder that had crept into his bathroom during the night. There stood his wife holding a razor blade. Half of the mirror had been scraped clean of its coating of black paint. She whirled toward

Felix when he threw open the door.

"Oh! Felix you scared me . . ."

"Scared you? When I woke up and you weren't there, what did you think I'd think? And what do you think you're doing with that razor blade?"

"I didn't think about what you'd think. What do you think that I think I'm doing with this razor blade?" Dorothy was trying to confuse Felix and shift his attention and anger from her.

"It looks like you're scraping the paint off of the mirror. I'd have thought that you'd think about that more or, at least, ask me what I thought about it. You never did think of anyone but yourself. Why, if I even thought that you were worrying about what I was thinking and were also thinking about ruining my well-thought out plan . . ."

Dorothy was now completely befuddled. She was also thoroughly vexed. "Felix, shut up for God's sake!" Felix smiled to himself. He did so enjoy confusing Dorothy's feeble mind. The sight of the mirror brought him back to reality. He roughly shouldered his wife aside. Swiftly, he grabbed the face towel off the rack, reached and placed it over the mirror. As he covered the mirror, his face was clearly reflected in the mirror for a few seconds.

In a far away office, a camera went "click!". The automated computer which contained information on nearly every person in the country immediately began buzzing and whirring. An image of Felix's face flashed on a large television screen in a room filled with young men in khaki uniforms. Beside the image appeared the following information: Felix T. Hoke . . . age 36 . . . ht. 5'7" . . . wt. 156 . . . Rabble Rouser. Member of the White House black list, the FBI ten most wanted, the CIA's list of those engaged in un-American activities. First spoke out against the unions 7 years ago. Has periodically said derogatory things about the unions to his wife, Dorothy. Knows he is under surveillance. Apparently plans to take some action soon. Recommendation: subject should begin treatments for thought control and behavior modification immediately. Alternative: liquidation.

A white-gloved hand reached out and pushed a button on a key punch machine. The young faces were bathed in a red light which began flashing on the screen.

LIQUIDATION. LIQUIDATION.

Felix turned from the mirror to face Dorothy.

"Dorothy, let me tell you something. Don't ever, and I mean ever, scrape the paint off any of the mirrors again. I mean this. Do you want them to see. . .?"

"They! They! Don't start on me again."

Felix grabbed his wife's wrist with his hand. "Dorothy," He squeezed her wrist hard. "This is no joke. I'm quite serious. They are powerful, they are after me,

and they will get me if we're not careful." He glanced furtively at the covered mirror as if it were some horrible monster.

"That's your problem, Felix. I'm going to take a shower."

Felix shut the bathroom door as the water began drumming on the tile floor in the shower. "Yes it is my problem. A very big problem." He stared thoughtfully for a moment at the ruined television set and then snapped his fingers triumphantly. "I've got it." He scooped up his overcoat from the chair where he had thrown it the night before and ran to the door. As he reached for his hat on the rack by the door he ~~said~~ over his shoulder as if speaking to the TV, "The Vigilante shall ride again . . . Heigh-Yo Silver!" He chewed his fingernail thoughtfully for a moment. "No. Nope that's not the right show. What did the Vigilante say? Ciddiap Trigger? Ho, big fellow? On Dasher, on Dancer, on Prancer, on Vixen?" He chuckled hollowly to himself, closed the door and was gone.

Felix T. Hoke burst into his apartment and just as quickly shut the door. He noted idly that the water was still running in the shower. Damn he thought, that woman is going to kill us on the water bill this month. He sat his package down on the dining room table. He walked into the kitchen to get his bottle of bourbon out of the cabinet. He reached for a glass. There was none. He had forgotten that he had thrown out all of the glasses in the house to guard against poison. He would have to use one of the paper cups that he kept hidden behind the toilet in the bathroom. He walked over to the bathroom and knocked on the door. There was no answer. He knocked louder and this time he called his wife's name.

"Dorothy! Dorothy! Open the damn door!" Still no answer. He pounded loudly on the door. "Dorothy! Open this damn door!" There was still no answer. Felix was exasperated. He was always quick to anger. He had always been told that even the littlest things infuriated him. He was quite infuriated now. He smashed his shoulder against the door. The wood creaked. He smashed his shoulder against the door again. The wood groaned again but still held fast. He threw all his weight against the door and this time it was accompanied by a savage growl. The wood around the cheap lock creaked, groaned and splintered with a loud crash. The door flew open and Felix fell onto the bathroom floor. His nose smashed on the hard tile. Blood spurted out of both nostrils and gushed on the floor.

"Goddammit!" Felix cursed vehemently. "Goddammit all!" He quickly stood up, grabbed a towel off the rack to stem the flow of blood from his crushed nose, snatched the shower curtain and tore it aside. "Dorothy! By God I'll . . ."

Dorothy lay in the bottom of the shower. She did not move. Dark red blood oozed from two neatly round holes in her forehead and temple. She was quite dead.

Felix was a bit taken aback. "Uh Oh," he muttered. He began to grow angry again. The sight of Dorothy's dead body had stymied his first fit of rage but he was now working on another one. He reached and turned off the water. Dorothy! Dorothy was dead. He turned and walked back into the dining room, the rage slowly building to a crescendo. He began to pace swiftly around the couch. Dorothy dead. He had never really loved her but after living with the same person for fifteen years, he had become accustomed to her face. Besides, he liked the way she darned his socks. They should not have come in and just shot her. They could have sent her a bomb in the mail, they could have sent her a poison pin in a letter, they could even have fed her crushed glass in an ice cream cone. But to just walk into the apartment and simply shoot her, well that just was not ethical, it was not legal, it was not . . . original. Felix smashed his fist in his hand. He knew what he must do. If they had already shot Dorothy, he would soon be next. He strode over to the table and ripped the brown paper off the .45 caliber automatic he had bought at the gun shop. He shoved some shells into the magazine. He would show them. "Kill my wife will you?" He fired the pistol twice at the mirror. It shattered into a million pieces. "You'll be hearing from Felix T. Hoke soon. Real soon." He fired another two rounds at the mirror and walked out of the room. What people had always said about Felix was true. He got so very angry at the tiniest things.

The sound of Felix's voice echoing in the room with the TV screen was cut short by a loud explosion. The sound of the explosion was replaced almost immediately by static. "He shot the mike behind the mirror. But he is on his way." The man thumbed a button on a large desk microphone. "Mr. Hoke is on his way." He released the button and turned to face the woman who stood silently beside him. "You were right, Agent X-9. Planting that supposedly shot LMD* did the trick. You have done well." He turned and faced the console again and muttered more to himself than to the woman, "We shall soon be rid of Mr. Felix T. Hoke." He turned back to the woman, "You may go X-9. You should find a little something extra in your pay envelope this month." Mrs. Dorothy Hoke turned and walked silently out of the room.

Felix walked out onto the street. He was momentarily dazzled by the glare of the afternoon sun off of the sidewalk. He squinted his eyes and peered across the street. Sure enough, there stood the two men in their oversized trench coats, slouchy hats and dark glasses. Felix would recognize them anywhere. He turned to walk down the sidewalk to the newsstand. Another trenchcoat approached him.

"Uh oh," Felix muttered.

He turned to walk down the sidewalk away from the newsstand. A pair of dark glasses and a slouchy hat moved stealthily up the sidewalk towards him. He thought

*LMD-Life Model Decoy

maybe he could run down the street and escape them all. A long black car nosed up the street. Felix thought that the driver resembled Fearless Fosdick. He was hemmed in. Felix came close to panic.

Suddenly he was not Felix T. Hoke any more. He was Rooster Cogburn, he was Wyatt Earp, he was Matt Dillon, he was . . . the Vigilante. He pulled the big pistol out of his pocket. He was exhilarated with the feel of the pistol in his hand. He was drunk with the power of it all. How glorious it all was!

"Heigh-yo Silver!" Felix yelled as he fired the pistol at the man down the sidewalk. He missed. The bullet ricocheted off the side of a building and careened madly across the street to smash a window in an empty apartment. Almost immediately, seven Baretta automatics were brought out of concealed holsters. Felix did not have time to fire again before the first bullet hit him. He felt a thud in the elbow of his left arm. He looked down as bright blood sprang out of a hole in his shirt. It was a new shirt, too. Another bullet whizzed near him and Felix had the good sense to duck. He heard a choked cry behind him. He looked around and to his horror saw old Mrs. McGillucutty coming out of the market clutching her throat in agony. She crumpled down to the sidewalk and lay among her dropped groceries, her life running swiftly from her as her blood made an ever-increasing pool around her.

Suddenly it was not so glorious any more.

Felix felt the red rage well up within him and take control of his body. He stood up firing into the black car wildly. The Vigilante had disappeared when Mrs. McGillucutty died. The man who fired the gun was Felix T. Hoke, a grim Avenger who could not win.

"For Dorothy! For Mrs. McGillucutty!" Felix shouted as he ran toward the car. He reached the car and pointed the pistol in the window. It was a miracle that he had not been shot dead by now. He leaned down ready to shoot Fearless Fosdick through the head.

The car was empty. Felix was confused. There was not even a body in the car. The bullets had stopped whizzing around him. He turned to face the sidewalk that he had just run from. Seven trench coats, seven pairs of dark glasses, seven slouchy hats stood lined up in a neat row.

"As I was going to St. Ives . . ." thought Felix.

Seven black-gloved hands pointed seven Baretta muzzles at him. Felix knew he was dead. He quickly raised his .45 to fire. It was empty.

"Goddammit!" yelled Felix as he threw the .45 at the men with all his might. Seven bullets tore through Felix T. Hoke's body. Felix slumped to his knees. He raised his head to look at the sky filled with the grayish smoke of the city.

"God Damn it! God Damn it all!" he said. The impact of the next seven bullets

knocked Felix over onto his back. But Felix never knew. He was dead before the bullets struck.

The seven trench coats got into Fearless Fosdick's car. Other people would come later to clean up the mess. The trench coats did not have time to clean it up.

They had places to go

. . . Besides the trench coats local 801 did not allow them to do streets.

--Randy Ogle

